

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

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INFO USICA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

CONFIDENTIAL BUCHAREST 5716

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, RO

SUBJECT: ROMANIAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF PAPAL DEATH AND SUCCESSION

REF: STATE 205941

1. MENTION OF POPE PAUL VI'S DEATH IN THE TWO NATIONAL DAILIES WAS MINIMAL. IDENTICAL 13-LINE ITEMS APPEARED ON AUGUST 8 ANNOUNCING DEATH AT AGE 81, INTERIM POSITION OF CARDINAL VILLOT AND REQUIREMENT FOR CONCLAVE WITHIN 20 DAYS. BOTH PAPERS AUGUST 10 PRINTED TEXT OF BRIEF CEAUSESCU MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCE. "I AM GRIEVED AT THE NEWS OF THE DEATH OF POPE PAUL VI, A REMARKABLE PERSONAGE IN CONTEMPORARY LIFE WHOSE INITIATIVES AND CALLS FOR PEACE, DETENTE AND UNDERSTANDING AMONG PEOPLES (AND) FOR A WORLD

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WITHOUT ARMS AND WAR, WERE WIDELY KNOWN AND APPRECIATED. REGRETTING THIS HEAVY LOSS, I WISH TO EXPRESS ON THIS OCCASION, MY SINCERE CONDOLENCES." FINAL ITEM WAS IN AUGUST 13 SCINTEIA (NOT REPEATED, AS MOST ITEMS ARE, IN FOLLOWING DAY'S ROMANIA LIBERA), IN WHICH 11 1/2 LINES MENTIONED SATURDAY EVENING FUNERAL AND ATTENDANCE THERE AT OF ANDREOTTI, WALDHEIM AND "A SERIES OF FOREIGN

DELEGATIONS." WE ASSUME SIMILAR BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENTS
WERE INCLUDED IN RADIO NEWS BULLETINS ON RESPECTIVE DATES.

2. TELEVISION NEWS COVERAGE WAS SOMEWHAT LESS LACONIC.
DEATH WAS ANNOUNCED, CEAUSESCU MESSAGE READ AND FUNERAL
WAS GIVEN MORE PLAY, WITH MRS. CARTER (BUT NO COMMUNISTS)
NAMED AMONG THE REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE. THERE WAS
AT LEAST ONE FILM CLIP--OF CROWDS AT ST. PETERS EITHER
DURING LYING IN STATE OR DURING FUNERAL.

3. SPARSE ATTENTION WAS THAT NORMALLY ACCORDED NON-
CONTROVERSIAL FOREIGN EVENTS THAT CANNOT ESCAPE NOTICE
BUT DO NOT SERVE ANY USEFUL PURPOSE AS FAR AS RCP IS CONCERNED.
GIVEN RITUAL OF SENDING (AND PUBLISHING) MESSAGES
ON SUCH OCCASIONS, OMISSION WOULD HAVE BEEN NOTABLE,
WHEREAS FORMULATION USED WAS BRIEFEST POSSIBLE.
ROMANIAN ORTHOLOGY IS PRE-EMINENT CREED HERE, WHILE
CATHOLICISM IS ASSOCIATED WITH MAGYAR AND GERMAN MINORITIES,
AND NEITHER REASON OF STATE NOR POLITICAL EXPENDIENCY
CALLED FOR OFFICIAL ROMANIAN REPRESENTATION AT FUNERAL.
GIVEN CEAUSESCU'S STAUNCH ATHEISM AND THE CURRENT MEDIA
CAMPAIGN DENIGRATING "MYSTICISM" (RELIGION), WE EXPECT
NO MENTION OF DELIBERATIONS IN THE SISTINE CHAPEL UNTIL
RESULTS ARE ANNOUNCED AND ROMANIAN DAILIES CARRY CUSTOMARY
SUCCINCT NEWS CAPSULE NAMING 263RD PONTIF.

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